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THE DUBLIN LITERARY GAZETTE,

OR

WEEKLY CHRONICLE OF CRITICISM, BELLES LETTRES, AND FINE ARTS.

No. 23.

SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 1830.

PRICE 9d.

PERSONAL SKETCHES.

No. VII.

MR. DENMAN.

The mere bustling lawyer and the factious partizan are alike undeserving of notice; the man must be possessed of redeeming qualities, blessed with high talents, and warmed with generous feelings, nay more, he ought to have effected something towards the moral improvement and advantage of his fellow men, to warrant his being made the subject of honest and unexaggerated panegyric. I not only disclaim the notion of sketching every noisy advocate of the English bar, I condemn the practice. Let the uproarious *nisi prius* barrister, who has nothing to recommend him save the vigour of his lungs, move on undisturbed, the glory of his narrow and noisy sphere—the idol of the lovers of loudness and confusion, and the veneration of fee-giving attorneys, by whom alone his little will be respected, and his pert sayings had in remembrance.

Temptations beset the path of the lawyer of talent which are but too difficult to resist, and wealth and power are unhappily too often the reward of sycophancy and corruption: lawyers are not unfrequently found to be of easy virtue and grasping desires; and memorable examples teach us that learning and suberviency may be united in the same person; we experience consequently the greater delight in contemplating the character of a lawyer in whom learning and honesty, talent and virtue, are happily blended together, conducting their possessor, by so rare a union, through his public life without spot or blemish, and free from the slightest shadow of imputation in his private character. Such is the enviable condition of the subject of this sketch, who perhaps has endured less of the reproaches of his fellow countrymen, and gained more of their respect and love, than has fallen to the lot of any individual who has taken so prominent a part in the remarkable events of modern times. Mr. Denman is the son of Doctor Denman, one of the most eminent and learned physicians of his time; from Eton the subject of this sketch was sent to Cambridge, where he was not greatly distinguished for his mathematical attainments; he bears the character of being an excellent Etonian scholar however, well read in Greek and Latin authors, and who can repeat odes of Horace with as much facility as Sir James Scarlett can cite cases. The professional career of Mr. Denman has been successful, his name has been long before the public. But although he may have acquired practice considerable for a young barrister, I apprehend that of late years, it has not increased in proportion to his standing and experience: for this a good reason is assigned, his mind is neither so technical nor so subtle as that of Scarlett, it is not so powerful or comprehensive as that of Brougham,

and perhaps a better reason still is that he has none of those *little engaging ways*, which by some men have been found more useful in procuring practice, than sound learning, commanding talents, or spotless integrity.

It has twice occurred to me, in conducting strangers to see and hear the celebrated lawyers of the King's Bench, to have been asked with eagerness, who was that most gentlemanly looking person, sitting next to Mr. Brougham? the feeling which prompted the question, corresponded with that which I experienced when first I had the good fortune to hear Mr. Denman speak. There is something peculiarly captivating about him, inasmuch that if he rose to speak when you were anxious to depart, you would assuredly be tempted by a single glance at his countenance and figure, to pause and listen, and when you had heard the first sentence, you would as certainly wait, with unwearied patience, till the termination of his address. It is not that he arrests the attention by the brilliancy of his language, or surprises by the boldness of his conceptions; not that he exceeds other men by the richness of his imagery, or the originality of his eloquence, but that he surpasses most men in singleness of purpose, and honesty of intention, and that consequently what he says reaches the heart, and warms the feelings of his hearers. His person is tall, his voice deep toned, flexible and full, his manner natural and unstudied, his countenance open, prepossessing, and noble; it has something of the finely chiselled, finished appearance of a statue.

It must not be supposed that the hearer would be equally gratified in listening to Mr. Denman at all times, or that he is equally successful on every subject. A lawyer for example, would not be impressed with a very high opinion of his argumentative powers and logical discrimination, on strictly legal and technical subjects; his style is too loose, his manner too impetuous, and his mind too ardent, for the calm and cautious investigation of principles remote and difficult, and his over-anxious temper would prevent him from attempting an ingenious reconciliation of conflicting decisions. On such subjects, Mr. Pollock, from his strictly mathematical education, and reasoning habit, is as much superior to him, as he is his inferior in sound taste—in the charms of eloquence, and the beauties of classical knowledge.

These gentlemen, about the same standing in their profession, are each eminent in a peculiar line, but sink into mediocrity when they attempt achievements for which, by nature and education they are unfitted. Universal genius is rare: it is reserved for a Brougham or a Plunket, to exhibit shining proofs of what may be accomplished by a combination of the highest powers of reasoning, with chaste and manly eloquence. Messrs. Pollock and Denman can be excellent in one department only;

though unquestionably the subject of this sketch ranks higher as a reasoner than Mr. Pollock. As an orator, the latter gentleman has sunk many degrees in my estimation since I heard his defence of the *Morning Journal* Newspaper; never was there a more miserable failure, the records of forensic eloquence present not a single instance of a more abortive effort, than Mr. Pollock's speech on this occasion proved. A disagreeable mixture of law and declamation, just such a melancholy exhibition as might be expected from a mere lawyer, endeavouring to work himself into a fit of premeditated oratorical enthusiasm, evidently shewing that he thought it incumbent upon him to say something original and forcible, could he only discern what that original and forcible thing ought to be.

As a proof of the wretched taste in which this speech was conceived, it will be enough to say that he commenced by acquainting the jury with that solemn and interesting fact, that the press was the palladium of *all* their liberties, for which he cited his case in point, "the dedication of Junius:" then he read copious extracts from several big books with which his junior supplied him. And lastly, by way of peroration, he lugged in Erskine for the praise-worthy purpose, I presume, of proving to his audience how much he and Erskine differed: not satisfied with passing a barren compliment to the memory of that illustrious advocate, he must needs quote a passage, a glowing and highly-wrought passage, which would require all the energy and fire of an Erskine to carry off successfully. Brief though it was, Mr. Pollock had not committed it to memory, but pausing, he turned round to his obliging junior, who supplied him with the book, from which he read with admirable self-possession and composure, the following extract from Erskine's defence of Cuthell:

"The court of king's bench, since I have been at the bar, pronounced the infamous judgment of the pillory on a most respectable proprietor of a newspaper for a libel on the Russian Ambassador, copied, too, out of another paper, but which *I myself* showed to the court by the affidavit of his physician, appeared in the *first* as well as in the *second* paper, whilst the defendant was on his sick-bed in the country, delirious in a fever. I believe that affidavit is still on the files of the court. I have thought of it often, I have dreamed of it and started from my sleep, sunk back to sleep, and started from it again. The painful recollection of it I shall die with."

Of course this fell most languidly upon the ears of his audience, affected nobody, and almost converted into burlesque what was meant for a most touching appeal. I doubt if there be an individual at the English bar who could conduct a case of this description with such signal success as Mr. Denman; he has many of the best requisites for an advocate:

energetic and manly, nervous and impressive; he never suffers the attention to flag, or the subject to become wearisome; there is no insipidity, no stiffness or coldness about him: vigorous and effective, he does not approach the subject with the cautious policy of a hack-nied pleader, fearful of committing little faults, but throwing himself heart and soul into his cause, he identifies himself at once with his client's interest; he does not hesitate to weigh his words, and ponder upon sentences, but grapples boldly with his subject, and unlike those declaimers who are loud only in expression, while feeble in sentiment, he delivers his opinions in language pregnant with sound sense and generous feeling, advocating the cause he has espoused with zeal and intrepidity.

(To be concluded in our next.)

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck; a Romance.
By the Author of Frankenstein. 3 vols.
post 8vo.—London, Colburn and Bentley.

MRS. SHELLEY, in her preface to this novel, boldly avows the conviction that the so-named Perkin Warbeck was in reality the true Plantagenet, the lost young Duke of York. She says it is impossible to examine the records on the subject that exist in the tower of London, without coming to the same conclusion; and accordingly she makes the various adventures of this unfortunate prince, (so she insists on styling him,) commencing with his rescue from the tower in early childhood, and ending with the fatal termination of his career upon the scaffold, the story of her work. It is a sad recital; a series of disasters, enlivened only by the marriage of her hero with the lady Catherine Gordon; but yet the book is written with so much energy both of thought and expression, combined with so much truth and feminine delicacy of perception and feeling, that the reader's attention never for a moment flags. The characters are well contrasted with each other, and vividly developed in skilful relief, while the book is full of business, spirit-stirring scenes following each other in rapid succession, and always clearly and powerfully described. After Lord Lovel's unsuccessful insurrection, he traversed England with the alleged son of Edward Fourth under his charge: they are represented as arriving late and travel-wearied, on a stormy night, at a lonely cottage on a wild moor; soon after they had lain down to rest, two other storm-drenched travellers force an entrance into the hut, who prove to be Mynheer Jahn Warbeck, a Flemish money-lender well known at court, and his sister. Part of the scene that follows explains Mrs. Shelley's version of the passage of history, and the picture of the sleeping child is womanly and touching:

"Lovel and Warbeck kept silence, till the deep breathing of their companions shewed that they slept: then, in reply to the Fleming's questions, Lovel related the history of the last months, and at the conclusion frankly asked his advice and assistance in accomplishing his design of conveying the Duke of York to Winchester. Warbeck looked thoughtful on this demand, and after a pause said, 'I cannot say wherefore this unfortunate prince excites so strong an interest in me; for in truth my heart yearns towards him as if he were akin to me. Is it because he bore for a time my poor boy's name?'

"Warbeck paused; his hard features were strongly marked by grief.—'I and my sister,' he continued, 'crossed the country to visit my Peterkin, who was ill—who is lost to me now for ever.'

"A pause again ensued: the young soldier respected too much the father's grief to interrupt it. At length the Fleming said, 'Lord Lovel I will—I trust I can—save Duke Richard's life. My sister is kind-hearted; and the silence you have observed concerning the very existence of King Edward's son makes the task more easy. Madeline is about to return to her own country; she was to have taken my Peterkin with her. Let the prince again assume that name: it shall be my care to escort him in this character to Winchester; and at Portsmouth they may embark, while you follow your own plans, and take refuge with the friends you mention in these parts.'

"As Warbeck spoke, Lovel motioned to him to observe his sister, who, unable to sleep, was observing them with attention. 'Madeline does not understand our English,' said her brother; 'but it were well that she joined our counsels, which may continue in French. I have your leave, my lord, to disclose your secret to her? Fear her not: she would die rather than injure one hair of that poor child's head.'

"On Warbeck's invitation, the lady rose; and he, taking her hand, led her to the low couch of the Duke of York. Sleep and gentle dreams spread an irradiation of beauty over him: his glowing cheek, his eyes hardly closed, the masses of rich auburn hair that clustered on a brow of infantine smoothness and candour, the little hand and arm, which, thrown above his head, gave an air of helplessness to his attitude, combined to form a picture of childish grace and sweetness which no woman, and that woman a mother, could look on without emotions of tenderness. 'What an angelic child!' said the fair sister of Warbeck, as she stooped to kiss his rosy cheek—'what a noble looking boy! Who is he?'

"'One proscribed,' said the Cavalier—'one whom he who reigns over England would consign to a dungeon. Were he to fall into the hands of his enemies, they might not, indeed dare not, cut him off violently; but they would consume and crush him, by denying him all that contributes to health and life.'

Perkin's two visits to Ireland are very circumstantially narrated, but we can only find room for part of the attack on Waterford, described in the account of the second:

"On the fifteenth of July, 1497, the Duke of York, the Earl of Desmond, and the other chief of many names, some Geraldines, all allied to, or subject to them, as the O'Briens, the Roches, the Macarthy's, the Barry's, and others, assembled at Youghall, a town subject to the Earl of Desmond, and situated about mid-way between Cork and Waterford, at the mouth of the river Blackwater.

"On the twenty-second of July the army was in movement, and entered the county of Waterford; the chiefs, at the head of their respective followers, proceeded to the shrine of St. Declan at Ardmore, to make their vows for the success of their expedition. The church at Ardmore, the round tower, the shrine, and healing-rock, were all objects of peculiar sanctity. The Countess of Desmond, and her young son, and the fair Duchess of York, accompanied this procession from Youghall. After the celebration of mass, the

illustrious throng congregated on the rocky eminence, on which the mysterious tower is built overlooking the little bay, where the calm waters broke gently on the pebbly beach. It was a beauteous summer day; the noonday heat was tempered by the sea breeze, and relieved by the regular plash of the billows, as they spent themselves on the shore. A kind of silence—such silence as there can be among a multitude, such a silence as is preserved when the winds sing among the pines—possessed the crowd: they stood in security, in peace, surrounded by such objects as excited piety and awe; and yet the hopes of the warrior, and, if such a word may be used, a warrior's fears, possessed them; it was such a pause as the mountain-goat makes ere he commits himself to the precipice. A moment afterwards all was in motion; to the sound of warlike instruments the troops wound up the Ardmore mountains, looking down on the little fleet, that stemmed its slow way towards the harbour of Waterford. The ladies were left alone with few attendants. The young Duchess gazed on that band of departing warriors, whose sole standard was the spotless rose; they were soon lost in the foldings of the hills; again they emerged; her straining eye caught them. That little speck upon the mountain-side contained the sole hope and joy of her life, exposed to danger for the sake of little good; for Katherine, accustomed to the sight of armies, and to the companionship of chiefs and rulers, detected at once the small chance there was, that these men could bring to terms a strongly fortified city; but resignation supplied the place of hope; she believed that Richard would be spared; and, but for his own sake, she cared little whether a remote home in Ireland, or a palace in England receive them. She looked again on the mountain path; no smallest moving object gave sign of life; the sun-light slept upon the heathly uplands; the grey rocks stood in shadowy grandeur; Katherine sighed and turned again to the chapel, to offer still more fervent prayers, that on this beauteous earth, beneath this bright genial heaven, she might not be left desolate: whatever else her fortune, that Richard might be hers.

"The army which the Earl of Desmond led against Waterford, did not consist of more than two thousand men. With these he invested the western division of the city. Richard, with his peculiar troop, took his position at the extremity of this line, nearest Passage, close to Lombard's Marsh, there to protect the disembarkment of troops from the fleet.

Neither party failed in zeal or activity. The first days were actively employed in erecting works and bringing the cannon to play upon the town. On the third, in the very midst of their labours, while the Earl in his litter was carried close under the walls among the pioneers, and Lord Barry in his eagerness seized a spade and began to work, signals of attack were made from the town, and the troops poured out from the nearest gate. The advanced guard were too few to contend with them; they were driven back on the entrenchments. The citizens were full of fury and indignation; they rushed forward with loud cries, and created a confusion, which Desmond and Lord Barry were not slow to encounter; they brought a few regular troops to stand the assault; a well pointed cannon from the town